**Sustainability**

**Value to the College**
The college seeks to foster and to promote sustainability in the areas of: minimizing the environmental impact of the college; increasing the college's financial sustainability by identifying cost savings on energy costs, providing learning experiences as part of relevant courses and programs; and involving students in college wide sustainable practices.

**Connection to the Mission Statement**
Because the college is a student-centered campus, the opportunities for student involvement and learning that are encompassed by sustainability initiatives mesh well with the college’s mission.

**Definitions**

“Sustainability” implies that the critical activities of a higher education institution are (at a minimum) ecologically sound, socially just, and economically viable, and that they will continue to be so for future generations. A truly sustainable college or university would emphasize these concepts in its curriculum and research, preparing students to contribute as working citizens to an environmentally healthy and equitable society. The institution would function as a sustainable community, embodying responsible consumption of energy, water, and food, and supporting sustainable development in its local community and region (University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, 2008).

**Assessment: Past and Current**Sustainability was a strategic imperative in the 2004-2009 Strategic Plan. As Strategic Imperative H, the college aimed to integrate sustainability into the curriculum, commit to a sustainable campus culture and environment, and accomplish a major project (SUNY Cobleskill).

The Frisbie and Wheeler Hall construction projects were conducted according to LEED certification requirements.

A Sustainability Committee was formed to pursue environmental and energy conservation initiatives on campus.

 **Current and Long Term Changes (Outcomes)**

1. Commit to becoming a demonstration site for best practices.

* Action/Strategy:  Conduct a feasibility study, including a cost/benefit analysis of purchasing and implementing a gasifier, to convert animal waste to bio-energy.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  Completed study

How to Assess Outcome:  Bio-energy Advisory Team (BAT- Doug Goodale).

* Action/Strategy:  Investigate other projects such as wind, solar power, bio-fuels and composting.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools: Inventory of projects.

How to Assess Outcome: Completed inventory.

2.  Identify contractual opportunities with the community to generate revenues for the disposal of waste which can be converted to bio-energy.

* Action/Strategy:  Conduct a feasibility study, including a cost recovery fee review of charging third parties, to dispose of waste to convert to bio-energy.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  Completed study.

 How to Assess Outcome:  BAT Team (Doug Goodale).

3.  Employ the latest sustainable technologies and practices in college capital improvement projects.

* Action/Strategy:  Design new facilities and retrofit existing facilities to include the latest in sustainable technologies (e.g. LEEDS certifiable buildings, environmentally healthy products).

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  New technology integrated into campus structures.

How to Assess Outcome:  Monitor utility usage.

4.  Develop educational programs and courses that will educate and train students in the latest environmental, social, and personal sustainability.

* Action/Strategy:  Develop and market a Bachelor of Technology degree in Environmental and Energy Technologies.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  Approved degree.

How to Assess Outcome:  Monitor enrollment of new curriculum.

* Action/Strategy:  Integrate sustainable development practices across the curricula

**Measurement/Indicators:**

 Tools:  Classes offered with a sustainability component or components.

How to Assess Outcome:  Monitor number of classes offered.

* Action/Strategy:  Assess the feasibility of signing the Tailloires Agreement

**Measurement/Indicators**

Tools:  Taskforce to exam the feasibility of signing this agreement.

5.  Secure grants in the area of sustainability.

* Action/Strategy:  Identify and apply for sustainability grants.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  Collect and review data resulting from grants application.

How to Assess Outcome:  Principal Investigators report to campus community on grant results and campus savings.

6.  Establish an Environmental Science and Technology research center with a focus on sustainable technologies and practices.

* Action/Strategy:  Use the Environmental Science and Technology research center to identify best practices and technologies in environmental sustainability.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  Publish research results.

How to Assess Outcome:  Monitor how much alternative energy is produced through campus conversion of bio-waste into bio-energy.

7.  Promote administrative, faculty, staff, and student environmental stewardship in college wide sustainable practices.

* Action/Strategy:  Promote awareness and opportunities for participation in college-wide sustainable practices.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  Report on activities.

How to Assess Outcome:  Monitor student involvement in campus sustainability projects/activities.

8.  Reduce and consolidate campus use of electronic devices used to produce and process documents.

* Action/Strategy:  Determine opportunities for replacing several single-function devices with a single multifunction device.

 **Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  Assess needs and compare against equipment used; also use historical usage data to assess needs.

Timeframe:

How to Assess Outcome:  After establishing an initial cost baseline reflecting the campus' current costs, monitor local and contracted support document production costs and produce progress reports every six months.

9.  Reduce campus costs associated with creating, processing, and storing paper documents.

* Action/Strategy:  Replace paper handling, storage, and retrieval processes with functionally equivalent electronic counterparts.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

 Tools:  Document imaging and management technology and associated electronic workflows integrated into campus operations.

Timeframe:

How to Assess Outcome:  Monitor paper consumption on campus.

* Action/Strategy:  Conduct a study of printing costs to reveal opportunities for savings via the elimination of unnecessary printing or switching from paper to electronic output.

**Measurement/Indicators:**

 Tools:  Analyze printing activity using print management software already deployed to track instructional printing.

 Timeframe:

 How to Assess Outcome:  Monitor paper consumption on campus.

10.  Reduce energy consumption footprint for the College's centralized computer and network infrastructure.

* Action/Strategy:  Migrate hardware and software to newer energy efficient technologies (server virtualization, blade servers and networked storage arrays).

**Measurement/Indicators:**

Tools:  Collect and compare energy use equipment profiles between old new configurations as modernization steps are taken.

Timeframe:

How to Assess Outcome:  Monitor direct power consumption by computing and network equipment and the associated power use for A/C; correlate power use with introductions of new technology and produce progress reports at six-month intervals.

**References**University Leaders for a Sustainable Future.  (2008).  *About ULSF*.  http://www.ulsf.org/about.html

SUNY Cobleskill.  (n.d.)  *Strategic Imperative H*.  http://www.cobleskill.edu/strategic/SIHsustainable.asp